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ABSTRACT

This research report provides an overview of select topics in school philosophy from the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (NCA) membership in Kansas. The purpose was to examine a number of communities by attitude questionnaire to observe if stated school philosophy is a reality in school operation. Topics included philosophy and objectives, ways that needs are met, and communication among NCA members. School principals and community college presidents were surveyed, since they deal daily with a school's operation. Coded and tabulated responses constitute the major portion of the document. It is concluded that only a nebulous relationship is maintained between declared ideals written in philosophy statements and daily treatment given to students in most public schools. The epilogue contains an examination of the responses, subjective observation of practices at many schools, and suggestions for solutions to this dilemma. (ND)

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WHAT WE SAY
versus
WHAT WE DO

A study of Variations Between
Philosophy and Daily Operation
of North Central Association Member
Public Schools and Community Colleges

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FOREWORD

Collection of the stated philosophies from high school and community junior college members of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools made up of the first step in the review and study featured in this monograph. Next, an instrument to record current practices in each of these institutions was developed. Each principal or president was asked to reflect on the questions presented and to respond to the ten items included in the study sheet.

Responses from the administrators at each member institution were studied, coded, tabulated, reviewed, categorized and programmed into the IBM computer at Wichita State University, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Report on this work constitutes the major portion of the document. Examination of the responses coupled with subjective observation of practices at many schools created the content of the Epilogue.

Purpose of the study was to give written attention to an area usually given gentle, verbal treatment or ignored in written comment in final evaluation reports. Further, it was suspected that the area of philosophical dedication and daily practices reflected varying degrees of fulfillment of promise as set forth in the Cardinal Principles (1918), Self Realization (1938), Imperatives (1944) and created for many educators an unwanted dichotomy. Imitation and creativity, philosophical ideal and day to day running the schools seemed to present a combined philosophy in schools as Adam and Abraham in Herzberg's Work and the Nature of Man. This study, therefore,

was chosen to present the operation by cult of efficiency (R. Callahan) training and the ideals of individual dignity and worth in Kansas school operation.

Suggestions for solutions to the dilemma are presented in the Epilogue. Implementation of a closer relationship with students and their needs, with the community and its desires for a good life and with greater emphasis upon values lies in the hands of school leaders.

Assistance by the Kansas State Department of Education, the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges State Committee, and the Wichita State University College of Education is gratefully acknowledged. Special thanks for typing and manuscript review goes to Marge Mathews and Beverly Greenlee of the Wichita State University Educational Administration and Supervision Unit.

R. L. B.

The Problem

Education is considered the process or product of continuous interaction and motivation in the learner's environment. By this definition educators may well establish a framework within which the process itself may be identified. It is the objective of a community's process to meet the educational needs of individual students in a blend of skill, attitude, and understanding. But, how do the schools identify this process? One answer is to be found in each school's written statement of philosophy and objectives. The written statement of school philosophy is often times a legal necessity. A statement of school philosophy is required for membership in the North Central Association.

It is the purpose of this research to provide an overview of select topics in school philosophy from NCA membership in the State of Kansas. Specifically, the purpose is to examine a number of communities to observe if stated school philosophy is a reality in the operation of a school.

In exploring this process in schools the most valuable responses are those found in the people who daily deal with the school's operation: the building principal and/or the Community College president.

Design of the Study

An attitude questionnaire was sent to the building principal of each NCA accredited high school in the State of Kansas. This same questionnaire was also sent to each Community College president in the State. A number of junior high schools, elementary schools and private schools were also included in the survey.

I. Design of the questionnaire :

A. Date of the last revision of the stated philosophy;
B. Rank of select school objectives in the order of local importance;
C. Attitude toward meeting educational objectives, (cross reference to the six stated objectives from the questionnaire);
D. Rank of school objectives in order of need for improved emphasis;
E. Attitude of program operation (organizational to individual).

II. List of variables analyzed by computer

VAR001	Years since philosophy was last revised
VAR002	Cultural objectives (Rank)
VAR003	Spiritual objectives (Rank)
VAR004	Social objectives (Rank)
VAR005	Vocational objectives (Rank)
VAR006	Intellectual objectives (Rank)
VAR007	Physical objectives (Rank)
VAR008	Attitude toward program meeting above needs (Rank)

III. Rank of objectives for increased emphasis

VAR009	No emphasis needed
VAR010	1st Rank
VAR011	2nd Rank
VAR012	3rd Rank
VAR013	4th Rank
VAR014	5th Rank
VAR015	6th Rank
VAR016	All objectives needed
VAR017	Attitude toward (organizational vs individual) methodology
VAR018	Geographic location

IV. Testable hypotheses

1) Less populated areas tend to differ from more populated areas in mean length of time since the last philosophy revision.

2) Community Colleges tend to differ from other systems in mean length of time since the last philosophy revision.

3) Less populated areas tend to differ from more populated areas in mean attitude toward meeting student needs.

4) Community Colleges tend to differ from other systems in mean attitude toward meeting student needs.

Data from returned questionnaires were coded and key punched for processing by computer at Wichita State University.

Analysis of Results

At the time of the study NCA membership included 175 Secondary Schools and 19 Public Community Colleges with 4 Private Community Colleges. Of the total number of questionaires mailed one hundred-eleven were returned for processing.

1) 53 Single school areas
2) 24 Two or three school areas
3) 18 Multi school areas
4) 16 Community Colleges

A one-way analysis of variance was applied to the mean time elapsed since the philosophy was last revised. Based on the data, no provision was found to substantiate the test hypotheses one or two.

($F=.76$, $df=3/107$, $\bar{x}=2.90$)

TABLE 1

Mean Time in Years Since Last Philosophy Revision:

Single school	3.17
Two of three school	2.96
Multi school	2.44
Community college	2.43
Total Population	2.90

TABLE 2

Mean Rank of Select Objectives from School Philosophy:

Intellectual	1.577
Vocational	2.946
Social	3.595
Cultural	3.793
Physical	4.216
Spiritual	4.829

TABLE 3

Mean Rank of Objectives Need for Improved Emphasis:

Spiritual	2.423
Physical	2.595
Cultural	2.685
Intellectual	2.712
Social	2.739
Vocational	3.009

A one way analysis of variance was applied to the mean attitude toward meeting stated objectives. The differences between groups were significant ($F=2.85$, $df= 3/107$, $p < .05$). Post hoc analyses of all possible group comparisons made by the Scheffe' test revealed that the community college group ($\bar{x}=1.375$) met significantly more student needs than did the multi-school building group ($\bar{x}=1.500$) which met significantly more needs than did the two or three building group ($\bar{x}=1.625$) which met significantly more student needs than did the single-school building group ($\bar{x}=1.736$).

TABLE 4

Mean Description of Subpopulations by Attitude (Organizational vs Individual) Toward Methodology:

Scale: (1) high organizational to (5) high individual

Single school	2.925
Two or three school	3.125
Multi	3.167
Community college	4.250

Summary

In establishing an overview of philosophy and objectives on a statewide basis it is important to remind the reader that restraint must be used in applying statistical results to any one specific educational program.

The purpose of this research was to identify common ground. Common objectives and common philosophical grounds were found in educational systems both large and small. Specifically, the research identified those areas from educational systems sharing similar responsibilities of accreditation, the membership of the North Central Association in the State of Kansas.

With this common membership the questions posed were: 1) How does each system undertake its business; 2) What process does each have in common with the other?

In sharing common membership we were able to question the roots of educational purpose and to develop windows to view the process of school philosophy as it works and as it is written.

Data from the response instrument have shown that it is possible to recognize the differences in attitude which do exist in educational programs throughout the State for the purpose of putting ourselves in a more informed position to view the possible causes. Cause applies directly to NCA membership. For, if differences in program philosophy do exist how does NCA deal with evaluation in each unique situation? Does a framework of assessment exist which cherishes autonomy but demands responsibility? It is this researcher's opinion that this framework does exist. Data gathered in this research points to the identity of common educational needs shared by each

type of community, focused and demonstrated by responsible membership in the North Central Association.

The research has also identified the lack of communication within the organization. It is possible, by examining individual school philosophies and comparing them with NCA evaluations, to expose this communication lag. The research implies that there is a tendency to use the assessment framework only when necessary. The mean elapsed time for philosophy in the sample was about three years. Question: Should not an active process demand constant reassessment of objectives? Or, if reassessment is an active part of these educational programs, should it not be continuously shared with other members of the body?

Every community in the State is unique. Each has special educational needs which coincide with demands from population, geographic location, local business, and political climate. This research has demonstrated that the differences do exist and might be interwoven in the educational program as its active philosophy.

Conclusion

The research has asked if the schools really do what they say they do. It has examined part of the process of educational programs and what they have in common. More than anything else it has indicated that educational programs are constantly altered to meet situational needs. It has shown the difficulty in stating philosophy and objectives which can daily be incorporated into every program. And lastly, it has shown the lack of communication within the NCA membership in sharing common problems and common successes.

The NCA assessment framework offers the common ground necessary to motivate educators to overcome these difficult-to-grasp areas. The framework has the potential of demonstrating that school philosophy and objectives can become an active, daily and congruent part of every educational program; and, at the same time, provide specific information to be utilized in other programs involved in the process. The assessment framework would no longer be a passive part of a cyclic process of evaluation, but would become the core of interaction for other programs involved in the same common process. The process would then become an active and constant source for educational philosophy and objectives. We, as educators, could then assert that we do indeed, do what we say we do.

EPILOGUE

Where are the cherished ethics, values, aspirations of genus humanum commonly expressed? They have lived in the Upanishads, the saying of LAOTZU, the Bible, the Koran, the Cardinal Principles, and philosophies composed in schools all over America. Traditional school philosophy statements give a pleasing response to society's yearning to understand who we are, what life is about, what we are doing here and a search for the good life. It is indeed from such background and moral commitment that faculties in schools develop a stance on what God and the community expects of educators and the educated. The drive to establish and force order and stability in society is reflected in the daily shape-up practices in schools. A nebulous, cloudy relationship is maintained with the ideals declared in the written philosophy statements and the daily treatment given students in most public schools. Community Colleges seem to do better with this problem.

What stands between man and his dreams? Shifting social conditions, changing political climates, economic depression and inflation, fluctuations in school enrollments, and youth disenchantments with things as they are, all create their input between realization of dreams of the good life and daily operation. Social pressure to place discipline as the first back to basic drive fits neatly into the cult of efficiency, industrial-patterned school climate. Codes of ethics, standards of behavior, and especially rules and regulations become intertwined in administration and in the classroom.

School committees often imitate inherited statements of philosophy but are found in practice to deny most students the possibilities of creativity. If a continuum were created with dreams at one end and forced shape-up or-drop-out at the other extreme, most member schools would appear somewhere near center on the line. Some schools function in a quid pro quo agreement; a two way relationship of mutual assistance. However, the stated philosophy remains engraved mainly in words, not in action.

American society seems suspicious of learning that produces ideas as contrasted with pursuit of practical, self-gratifying, get you something (money, power, job, mate) ends. This conflict between creativity and conformity, between self-disciplined democracy and a veneration for authority, cooperation and competition, ideal versus practical make for many youth a contradiction and confusion. Yet other young people accept these opposites and go about their daily living with seeming peace of mind and happiness of spirit.

Perhaps the thrust of this study may suggest that student goals of college orientation or for others the world of work or for a third group a drift toward child rearing and home management all deserve more than lip service to ideals. Certainly there is more at stake than job or career training. As Buckminster Fuller has put it, the student is "learning a living." Community colleges, as viewed in this study, seem to meet student needs and provide a suitable climate for learning a living. North Central Association high schools would do the students and all of society a greater service by giving close attention and effort to making the published

school philosophy an individualized bond between student and school.

Creation of a set of measurable objectives to put into action what we say we do, with evaluative milestones erected to check our progress may well serve to enrich the continuum to what we actually do with students. Schools thus may become more cherished by all as a constituent of the good life.